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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 004528

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SENSITIVE
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SUBJECT: UAE FNC ELECTIONS RESULTS: 20 MEMBERS, INCLUDING ONE WOMAN, ELECTED

REFS: ABU DHABI 4359 AND PREVIOUS

¶1. (U) Summary: On December 16, 18, and 20, the UAE held their first limited election for 20 members of its 40-member Federal National Council (FNC). Despite the fact that 14% (65) of all candidates were women, only one woman was elected--in the emirate of Abu Dhabi.

Even though voting was limited to a small appointed electorate of only 6,689 people, voter turn-out ranged from 60% to 90%, with a total of 5,171 votes being cast. Challenges to the vote count can be filed until December 22, and final election results will be announced on December 25. As was previously reported, it is expected that the remaining 20 members of the FNC will be appointed by emirate rulers in the next couple of weeks. End Summary.

Participation - Voter Turn-Out

¶2. (U) Approximately 77% of all eligible voters participated in the UAE's first national elections. The northern emirates generally had the highest level of participation, and the urban centers of Abu Dhabi and Dubai had the lowest. Voter turn-out was as follows:

- Abu Dhabi - 1,048 votes cast (60% of electorate).
- Dubai - 1,080 votes cast (71% of electorate).
- Sharjah - 836 votes cast (83% of electorate).
- Ras Al Khaimah - 1,061 votes cast (79% of electorate).
- Fujairah, 417 votes cast (90% of electorate).
- Ajman, 371 votes cast (85% of electorate).
- Umm Al Quwain - 358 votes cast (89% of electorate).

¶3. (U) Throughout the elections journalists were allowed to enter polling stations, and the voting process was often covered live on local television stations. A brief survey of press articles in the major English and Arabic dailies during the elections and the two-week campaign period prior, reveals that the topics that were discussed the most were health, education, demographic imbalance, FNC reform, cost of living, and unemployment.

¶4. (U) In a public release through the Emirates News Agency (WAM) the Minister of State for FNC Affairs Dr. Anwar Gargash lauded the high voting percentage, and noted that approximately 90% of winners are "young blood" referring to the relatively young age of the winners--the oldest winning candidate is only 55 yrs old (according to published bio data). Dr. Amal Al Qubaisi, the only woman elected to the FNC, commented that "the UAE is heading towards a political process where both men and women are treated equally."

Next Steps

¶5. (SBU) At the conclusion of polling on December 20, UAE President Sheikh Khalifa BIN Zayed Al-Nahyan congratulated all participants and stated that the victors have "won a responsibility to be shouldered through caring for the people's issues." He stated that this "current gradual parliamentary approach would positively contribute to the building of a matured and full-fledged parliamentary process" and promised that the government would

"create the right climate to enable the FNC to live up to its role as a bridge between citizens, state institutions, and its executive and administrative leaders." The elections will be certified on December 25 following a two-day period during which the election results can be contested. Khalifa has previously stated that the appointment of the remaining 20 members of the FNC will closely follow the elections. These appointments, made by the local rulers of each emirate, may seek to balance the election results and may include more women.

16. (U) Information about the Winners

Abu Dhabi

- Mohamed Mohamed Fadel Al-Hameli, extensive experience with Abu Dhabi Municipality and Town Planning Department. MBA from New Hampshire University. Born in 1964.
- Ahmed Shabeb Mohammed Al-Dhaheri, former deputy speaker and two-time appointed member of the FNC. He is currently the Executive Director of Scholarships at Abu Dhabi Investment Authority. B.A in Economics from La Verne University. Born in 1961.
- Dr. Amal Abdullah Al-Qubeisi, Professor of Architecture at UAE University. Ph.D. in Architecture from UAE University.
- Rashed Mohamed Ali Al-Marar, joined the UAE Foreign Ministry in 1988. Degree in Marketing from the American College in London. Born in 1964.

Fujairah

- Major Dr. Sultan Ahmed Danhani, Director of Human Resource Department, Fujairah Police Department. Doctorate from Cairo Police Academy. Born in 1965.

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- Ahmed Saeed Al-Danhani, former Ambassador to China, Spain and Tunisia, is currently the Director of the Department of Science and Research in Abu Dhabi. Graduate of Economy and Political Science from UAE University. Born in 1971.

Dubai

- Jamal Al-Hai, senior official at the Department of Civil Aviation. Bachelor's degree in Administration and Media Communication from UAE University. Born in 1960.
- Khalid Ali Ahmed bin Zayed, Director of Administration for Municipality Centers. Degree in General Administration from UAE University. Born in 1964.
- Sultan Saqr Al-Suweidi, Secretary General of the General Authority of Youth and Sports. Bachelor's degree in History from Alexandria University in Egypt. Born in 1951.
- Hussein Al-Sha'afar, a businessman with experience in construction, insurance and security systems. Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from South Eastern University in London. Born in 1968.

Ras Al Khaimah

- Abdullah Ahmed Al-Shehi, a graduate of Business Administration from the UAE University, with experience working in the health sector. Born 1967.
- Dr. Abdul Rahim Shaheen, a political science professor at UAE University, a political commentator, and author of several books including a 2006 book on the mission and accomplishment of the FNC. Doctorate in Political Science from Cairo University. Born 1957.
- Yousef Obaid Al-Nuaimi, Vice Chairman of the RAK Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Bachelor's Degree in English Language from a British university. Born 1953.

-No bio information yet available on the following-

Sharjah

- Dr. Obaid Ali Obaid bin Butti
- Khalifa Abdullah bin Howaiden
- Hamad Hareth Al Midfa

Ajman

- Hamad bin Abdullah Al Ghafli
- Khalid Mohamed Bu Shahab

Umm Al Quwain

- Sultan Saif Al Qubaisi
- Yousef Ali Fadel bin Fadel

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